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ABSTRACT

Noting that kindergarten teachers in Nevada report that many children enter school with considerable delays in language and vocabulary, this report focuses on the public support of prekindergarten education for school readiness in Nevada. The report discusses the purposes and benefit of early childhood education, examines the initiatives of other states and countries with regard to prekindergarten education, and identifies prekindergarten programs already operating in Nevada. Presented in tabular format is information on prekindergarten education in Nevada for fiscal year 1999, including the main funding source, numbers of children served, and average cost per child. The report also details criteria for a high quality prekindergarten program and makes recommendations for developing an early childhood agenda that promotes school readiness in Nevada's children. The report concludes with recommendations for the state legislature to increase education funding for successful early childhood programs and to commission a legislative interim study to develop a plan for a comprehensive system of early care and education in Nevada. Appended is a copy of the National Governors' Association Briefing on Nevada and a table delineating state ranks on their financial commitments to child care and early education. (Contains approximately 90 references.) (KB)

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PUBLIC SUPPORT OF PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION

FOR SCHOOL READINESS IN NEVADA

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Executive Summary

PUBLIC SUPPORT OF PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION
FOR SCHOOL READINESS IN NEVADA

It is estimated that about 100,000 prekindergarten aged three-, four-, and five-year-olds lived in Nevada in 1999. The number of children accounted for in prekindergarten programs or private preschools in 1999 was 27,271. The balance of 72,729 prekindergarten aged children may not have had a quality preschool environment in 1999. Most of those children are now in the public school system.

Nevada Kindergarten teachers report that many children enter school with considerable delays in language and vocabulary. Not all Nevada parents are reading to their young children at home.

School readiness has become increasingly more challenging and urgent for Nevada school districts. Recent research findings have confirmed that the early experiences of young children permanently shape their brains and impact their chances for success in education and life. Nevada children are counting on the adults in their lives to cherish, protect, understand, guide, and teach them.

Although acknowledging the importance of appropriate environments and experiences from birth, this paper will focus on one aspect of early care and education: *public support of prekindergarten education for school readiness.*

Prekindergarten programs, in general practice, provide early childhood education for three-, four-, and five-year-old children who are under the kindergarten admission age.

In the context of this paper, the major goal of early childhood education is school readiness. We want children to start school with the healthy minds, bodies and mental alertness necessary for learning. The research findings summarized below (Lunenburg and Irby, 1999) confirm the importance of high quality early education experiences:

- *One or two years of preschool can improve children's school readiness, early scholastic achievement, and school competence, such as lower grade retention and special education placement (Barnett, 1992; Haskins, 1989; Hubbell, 1983; McKey et al., 1985; Reynolds, 1995; West, Hauskien, Chandler, and Collins, 1992; White, 1985).*

- *Preschool experiences reduce school dropout rate and increase employability (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, and Weikart, 1984; Reynolds, 1994; Schweinhart, Barnes, and Weikart, 1993).*

- *Early attainment sets boundaries on later attainment* (Clarification added: Certain brain connections are made or not made during critical periods in infancy and early childhood that can permanently affect later learning). *(Alexander and Entwisle, 1988; Belsky and MacKinnon, 1994; Entwisle, Alexander, Cadigan, and Pallas, 1986).*

- *High quality nonparental preschool experiences are related to positive functioning in the early elementary grades (Anderson, 1989; Belsky and MacKinnon, 1994; Field, 1991; Howes, 1988; Vandell and Corasaniti, 1990; Vandell, Henderson, and Wilson, 1988; Whitebrook, Howes, and Phillips, 1990).*

The basic challenge to supporters of public prekindergarten education is to educate the public and policy makers about the value of early care and education in promoting a strong society with productive citizens, public safety, and crime reduction. People must understand that **early learning is permanent learning.**

There have been several recent surveys of states regarding their various prekindergarten initiatives. Many are recognizing the importance of early education in preparing children for school. At the end of the twentieth century, 42 states reported funding prekindergarten initiatives. Many consider prekindergarten education an essential element of school reform.

An Education Week report in January 2000 ranked Nevada 40th in allocation of resources for K-12 education, spending an average of $5,478 in federal and state funds per student. A 1997 Children's Defense Fund Briefing Report ranked Nevada 47th in its commitment to securing funds for child care and early education, spending 34 times more on Corrections, 101 times more on Highways, and 103 times more on Higher Education.

Eventually Nevada must make a permanent commitment for a statewide Early Childhood Education Program that will make quality environments and education accessible to every Nevada child from birth.

Nevada already has effective models established in the state. When Nevada commits to supporting universal voluntary prekindergarten services for all children, a phase-in plan must be established. Initially, state funds should be allocated to expand existing effective prekindergarten programs so that more children and families can be served.

The Legislature could approve enhancement of the Department of Education's budget for Early Childhood Education Programs for the 2001-2003 biennium. Those funds could be made available on a competitive basis to school districts and community-based organizations to expand or initiate programs that meet the quality criteria established by the Department.

When multiple agencies manage early care and education programs, mission fragmentation and program overlap may occur. This creates the potential for service duplication and gaps. In addition to strengthening current effective programs, Nevada needs a legislatively established Interim Study of Early Care and Education.

Convincing research, national trends, and poor state rankings are placing increased pressure on Nevada policy makers to make significant financial commitments to young children and their families so that all of Nevada's children will receive the foundations necessary for success in school and in life.

The 2001 Nevada State Legislature is encouraged to place an emphasis on prekindergarten education for school readiness by

1. Increasing education funding for successful programs such as Even Start, Head Start, and Classroom on Wheels.

2. Commissioning a Legislative Interim Study to develop a plan for a comprehensive system of early care and education in Nevada.

Foreword

As the Early Childhood Education Consultant for the Nevada Department of Education, I acquired many reports and other literature related to the field of early care and education. My professional library grew along with public interest and support for high quality educational experiences for children in the early years. Solid research had confirmed the necessity and the long-term effectiveness of early childhood education, yet public policy had not caught up with public sentiment.

In over 20 years as an early childhood advocate and specialist in Nevada, I have visited many programs and represented the Department of Education on interagency committees and advisory councils related to Child Care, Early Intervention, Head Start, Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children, Success by Six, Kids Count, Family to Family Connection, Foster and Adoptive Children, Perinatal Substance Abuse, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Even Start Family Literacy Programs, Nevada PTA, and others. There is an inspiring and invigorating unity among early childhood advocates in this state, who willingly provided information for this document.

I knew that I had access to all the information any policy maker would ever need to build a solid argument for prekindergarten education in Nevada. If I didn't have the information in my office, I knew who did. The overwhelming challenge for me was to find a way to summarize everything in a way that would be relevant and useful for Nevada policy makers.

Then along came Jeanne Reuter. She was an Americorps Promise Fellow committed to serving Nevada for one year through a Washoe County School District project to assist with statewide early education issues and initiatives. This energetic, seasoned teacher and grandmother recently completed a year of national service as a VISTA member (Volunteers in Service to America) after she obtained a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education in 1995. Jeanne reviewed the literature in my office, on the internet, and in libraries, and prepared summaries of the highlights for me. Please refer to resources in the Reading List for more complete coverage of the materials Jeanne and I reviewed for this document.

All of the information we gathered was synthesized into this single document to assist the Nevada State Board of Education and other state policy makers in developing a strategy to ensure that all of Nevada's prekindergarten children have access to high quality, affordable prekindergarten education that will provide the foundation that prepares them to meet the high education standards established for Nevada.

Sharon Rogers, Early Childhood Education Consultant, Nevada Department of Education
Retired August 2000

PUBLIC SUPPORT OF PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL READINESS IN NEVADA

Introduction

Nevada's kindergarten teachers have their hands full! They typically teach two sessions a day, some with as many as 35 children in each class. The children come from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social, economic, and language backgrounds. Kindergarten teachers report that many children enter school with considerable delays in language and vocabulary. Not all Nevada parents are reading to their young children at home. In the 1999 administration of Nevada's required assessment of children who did not complete kindergarten and enrolled in first grade, approximately 25% of the children tested did not achieve a passing score.

School readiness has become increasingly more challenging and urgent for Nevada school districts. Recent research findings have confirmed that the early experiences of young children permanently shape their brains and impact their chances for success in education and life. Nevada children are counting on the adults in their lives to cherish, protect, understand, guide, and teach them.

There are many terms used to describe the experiences and services that influence young children's learning and brain development, such as parenting, day care, child care, preschool, early childhood education, early intervention, and early childhood special education. The first national and state education goal is that children will start school "ready to learn." The early efforts to prepare children for later school success are frequently called "early care and education" since the line between care and education has become blurred.

Although acknowledging the importance of appropriate environments and experiences from birth, this paper will focus on one aspect of early care and education: *public support of prekindergarten education for school readiness.* Prekindergarten programs, in general practice, provide early childhood education for three-, four-, and five-year-old children who are under the kindergarten admission age. The Nevada Department of Human Resources has information on the status of early care and education of children under age three, as well as the condition of child care in general in Nevada.

It is estimated that about 100,000 prekindergarten-aged three-, four-, and five-year-olds lived in Nevada in 1999. The number of children accounted for in prekindergarten programs or private preschools in 1999 was 27,271. A balance of 72,729 prekindergarten aged children may not have had a quality preschool environment in 1999. Most of those children are now in the public school system.

What are the purposes and benefits of early childhood education?

In the context of this paper, the major goal of early childhood education is school readiness for all children. We want children to start school with the healthy minds, bodies and mental alertness necessary for learning. Several statewide collaborative interagency efforts have been approaching this goal in a holistic manner since no one agency or service delivery system can provide all the components needed for a comprehensive early care and education system offered to all children and families in the state. A federally funded project is underway to develop common statewide early childhood education and family literacy outcomes and indicators. It is expected that Nevada will eventually select readiness indicators similar to ones developed by other states, which address the following:

- Health Related Indicators
- Social/Economic Related Indicators
- Educational Program Participation Indicators
- Developmental Indicators
- Quality Indicators
- Accessibility Indicators
- Affordability Indicators

Volumes of research findings have been reported about early care and education:

The 1993 Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study by the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) had the following key findings:

- *Children who experienced higher quality child care showed higher levels of language, academic, and social skills while they were in child care and during kindergarten.*

- *The quality of child care at four years of age affected children's development through second grade for a range of academic and social skills.*

- *The quality of child care is a matter for all children, with somewhat stronger effects on math and behavior problems for children from less advantaged families.*

The Abecedarian Project followed infants from low-income families and an experimental control group to age 21. The study found that young adults who had been in the high quality early childhood program consistently out-performed their peers on cognitive tests and on math and reading achievement tests, and more of them were in college or in high-skill jobs.

The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study reported on the status at age 27 of low-income participants who received quality preschool experiences and their control group peers who did not participate in preschool. The High/Scope Educational Research Foundation reported that "adults born in poverty who attended a high-quality, active learning preschool program at ages 3 and 4 have half as many

criminal arrests, higher earnings and property wealth, and greater commitment to marriage. Over participants' lifetimes, the public is receiving an estimated $7.16 for every dollar invested."

A recent report by the National Research Council, *Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children*, stresses that good early education experiences help ensure that young children have opportunities to build their language and literacy skills so they can enter school ready to learn and to read.

The following concise synthesis of various studies was made by Lunenburg and Irby in their 1999 book, *High Expectations: An Action Plan for Implementing Goals 2000:*

What Research Says About Preschool Experiences

- *One or two years of preschool can improve children's school readiness, early scholastic achievement, and school competence, such as lower grade retention and special education placement (Barnett, 1992; Haskins, 1989; Hubbell, 1983; McKey et al., 1985; Reynolds, 1995; West, Hauskien, Chandler, and Collins, 1992; White, 1985).*

- *Preschool experiences reduce school dropout rate and increase employability (Berrueta-Clement, Schweinhart, Barnett, Epstein, and Weikart, 1984; Reynolds, 1994; Schweinhart, Barnes, and Weikart, 1993).*

- *Early attainment sets boundaries on later attainment* [Clarification added: Certain brain connections are made or not made during critical periods in infancy and early childhood that can permanently affect later learning.] *(Alexander and Entwisle, 1988; Belsky and MacKinnon, 1994; Entwisle, Alexander, Cadigan, and Pallas, 1986).*

- *High quality nonparental preschool experiences are related to positive functioning in the early elementary grades (Anderson, 1989; Belsky and MacKinnon, 1994; Field, 1991; Howes, 1988; Vandell and Corasaniti, 1990; Vandell, Henderson, and Wilson, 1988; Whitebrook, Howes, and Phillips, 1990).*

(Lunenburg and Irby, 1999)

Public policy has been surprisingly slow to catch up with research. It has been hypothesized that people support or oppose public policies depending on how they understand the issues. Some are ambivalent about women's employment and oppose early care and education that facilitates women in the work force. Others object to it on the grounds that it allows too much government intervention into the lives of families. The reality is that non-parental early care and education is now the norm for young children in Nevada. According to Nevada Kids Count 2000, over 70% of our children under age six live with working parents. The issue is not parents getting what they need in order to go to work, but rather children getting what they need in order to grow.

Early care and education is not necessarily high on the priority list of those who don't have young children. Many believe early care and education is a family responsibility. However, a 1998 *Public Opinion in Nevada* survey of selected legislative issues by the University of Nevada, Reno, Senator Alan Bible Center for Applied Research, found that over 50% of those surveyed believed that state and local government in Nevada should be spending more for assistance to low-income workers to pay for child care. In that same survey, 62% of Nevadans were willing to pay more taxes for education. In a May 2000 national survey conducted by the National Parenting Association and Offspring Magazine, 81% favored and 49% strongly favored extending public education to include prekindergarten or early childhood education for all children.

The basic challenge to advocates for public prekindergarten education is to educate the public and policy makers about the value of early care and education in promoting a strong society with productive citizens, public safety, and crime reduction. People must understand that early learning is permanent learning.

What are other states and countries doing about prekindergarten education?

Many other countries recognize the importance of providing children with an educational experience from an early age. In France and Italy, for example, nearly all children are enrolled in publicly funded preschools. Swedish public policy stipulates that a secure, stimulating environment should complement what the home offers. The Toronto School District in Ontario, Canada—where 50% of families do not speak English at home—welcomes all young children and their families and helps ease the transition to school. The United States military child development system has significantly improved the quality and affordability of services by establishing an accreditation system that requires uniform standards, increased wages and training, and expanded availability.

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1999, almost 65% of mothers of preschool children are in the labor force. The 1996 welfare reform law requires parents who receive cash assistance to begin working within two years. Increased numbers of working parents have led states to develop programs that combine early care and education with employment programs.

There have been several recent surveys of states regarding their various prekindergarten initiatives. Many are recognizing the importance of early education in preparing children for school. At the end of the twentieth century, 42 states reported funding prekindergarten initiatives. Many consider prekindergarten education an essential element of school reform.

Addressing the shortage of appropriate classroom space, 33 states with prekindergarten programs fund classrooms not only in public schools, but in Head Start, child care centers, and other community facilities. Only a few states, such as Connecticut and Massachusetts, invest extensively in building, expanding and renovating facilities.

Most states target three- and four- year-old children whose language, family income, or other special needs place them at disadvantage when entering school. Some states require coordination between public schools, Head Start, and community preschools and offer financial incentives to local communities to develop early care and education systems.

Ten states with about half of the preschool age children in the United States spent three-fourths of the total prekindergarten dollars in 1998-99. Even with restricted eligibility, most state initiatives are not large enough to serve all eligible children or to spend enough per child to ensure high quality. The Head Start benchmark is $5,100 per child for half-day education and health services, with an estimated $10,000 per child for quality full day/full year services. A New Jersey court order established a rate of $9,000 per child for full day early childhood education services.

Georgia became the first state to offer universal access in 1993. In 1997, New York began phasing in a program that should provide universal prekindergarten by 2002. In 1998, Oklahoma began paying for all four-year-olds in school districts that choose to offer prekindergarten.

The National Institute on Early Childhood Development and Education of the Office of Educational Research and Innovation of the U. S. Department of Education provided the following highlights of state initiatives in a 2000 report entitled, *School Involvement in Early Childhood*:

The Connecticut Department of Education provides $1,930,000 in quality enhancement grants to its 16 priority school districts to improve preschool care and education, support networks of child care homes, and improve support to parents. Connecticut distributes $39,000,000 school readiness funds to its 16 Priority School Districts and 25 severe need schools that serve 6,352 preschoolers in public schools, Head Start, and child care programs. Community School Readiness Councils' community partnerships between chief elected officials and school superintendents coordinate the development of a range of preschool care and education for all children and provide local control of school readiness funds.

Florida legislation passed in 1999 requires all counties to form coalitions that include school superintendents and other community and private sector leaders to support early childhood education. The county coalitions are responsible for all state health and education funds for young children from prenatal through age five.

Georgia uses state lottery funds to offer voluntary prekindergarten for all four-year-olds. Initiated in 1993, the program currently enrolls 61,000 children in schools, Head Start, and child care centers. In an ongoing 12-year study of children's outcomes, kindergarten teachers rated 64 percent of the former prekindergarteners as above average in readiness for kindergarten, and at the end of the year, rated 68 percent of them as above average in readiness for first grade. The program received a 1997 Innovation in Government award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University.

Building on a $12 million prekindergarten initiative launched in 1986, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated $169.6 million for the 1999–2000 Early Childhood Block Grant. The block grant includes the Prekindergarten Program for Children At Risk of Academic Failure,

the Prevention Initiative Program for birth to three-year-olds and the Parent Training Initiative for parents with children from birth to five years old.

The Kansas Department of Education convened a group of representatives from Kansas agencies, universities, religious and other organizations, and parents to develop Quality Standards for Early Childhood Programs. The Departments of Education and Health have endorsed the Quality Standards and implemented them in all their sponsored programs. Parents as Teachers, Even Start, state university early childhood classes, and many private preschool care and education programs also use the standards.

The Kentucky Early Literacy Initiative is working to ensure all children are able to read at the proficient level on the Kentucky Core Content Test at the end of fourth grade. The initiative encourages preschool care and education programs to promote early literacy and provides professional development to help preschool and primary teachers master effective research-based reading strategies. Kentucky offers prekindergarten to four-year-olds who are eligible for free school lunches, 46 percent of all four-year-olds in the state. The University of Kentucky found that prekindergarten participants at ages seven and eight did as well as their peers who were not eligible for free school lunches.

Maryland defines school readiness as a state of early development that enables the individual child to engage in and benefit from first grade learning experience. Their school readiness model links prekindergarten through third grade curriculum, instruction, and assessment and aligns the system with the state's third grade test. Maryland provides training for public school, child care, and Head Start teachers on articulation of students' progress between preschool and public school and across grade levels.

The Michigan School Readiness Program, initiated as a pilot program in 1985, is serving over 23,000 children who are at risk of school failure in 1999–2000. An ongoing program evaluation found that the children entered kindergarten with significantly higher scores, including language and literacy, than similar children who had not attended the program. The children have continued a higher level of success than their peers through second grade, with significant differences in grade retention, interest in school, and physical ability.

Minnesota has been offering its statewide Early Childhood Family Education program—currently funded at $39 million with state and local taxes—through the public schools for 25 years. All families with children from birth to kindergarten are eligible, and about 42 percent of them participate—approximately 300,000 parents and children. The program offers parent discussions and education, parent-child activities, early learning activities, early health and developmental screening, lending libraries, community resource information, and home visits. Parents in the program report feeling more supported and confident, with a better understanding of child development and improved parenting skills.

In 1997, Mississippi began its Every Child a Reader initiative. Their "Getting Ready for Kindergarten" materials provide parents with tools for introducing children to print and phonemic awareness. Videotapes demonstrate how to read to children, even if the parents are non-readers. The state provides the materials to school districts and preschool care and education programs for every parent with a four- or five-year-old child.

Missouri offers the Parents as Teachers home-visiting program in every school district. In 1998, they assessed 3,500 beginning kindergartners in 80 schools on 7 dimensions of school readiness. The highest performing children had participated in Parents as Teachers and in preschool care and education programs, with children in high-poverty school districts scoring above average. Among children whose preschool care and education was in child care homes or who had not been in a program, those who had been in Parents as Teachers scored significantly higher than children who had not. In addition, teachers rated special-needs children who had participated in Parents as Teachers, preschool care and education, and early childhood special education programs as similar to average children.

New Jersey has paid for prekindergarten for all four-year-olds since the 1940s in school districts that chose to offer prekindergarten. In 1996, the state established Early Childhood Program Aid in response to a school finance equity lawsuit. The program pays for prekindergarten for all three- and four-year-olds in the state's 28 poorest school districts and offers funds to 108 other districts.[1] Note: In March of 2000 the New Jersey Supreme Court issued a strong affirmation for the rights of preschool children to a well-planned, high quality early education. The court rejected a two-tier system of preschools and affirmed the need for parity among programs whether they are operated in community facilities or in public schools. The court said, "Another generation will pay the price for each year of delay."[1]

North Carolina initiated Smart Start in 1993, and the program has grown from 18 counties to all 100 counties, with $150 million in state funds. The county-based program is designed to improve school readiness primarily by subsidizing child care costs and improving child care quality. A six-county evaluation found that Smart Start assistance that focused directly on improving child care classroom quality improved children's skills and behavior in kindergarten. Only 9 percent of children from centers that received this direct assistance had low cognitive skills, and only 10 percent had behavior problems, compared with 17 and 18 percent, respectively, of their peers. The program received a 1998 Innovation in Government award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard University.

Oklahoma began paying for free public education for all four-year-olds in 1998, a policy that doubled the number of prekindergarten students to 16,000.

Texas has the largest prekindergarten program in the country. The state has required school districts since 1984 to offer prekindergarten if they have at least 15 four-year-olds who are unable to speak or understand English, are eligible for free or reduced lunches, or are homeless.

Vermont has aligned licensing standards for preschool care and education programs in public schools, child care and Head Start centers, and other facilities. Their "Playing with the Standards" video demonstrates how preschools can implement state curriculum standards in playful classroom environments.

The Washington Partnership links Head Start programs, state prekindergarten programs, and child care providers with state agencies implementing WorkFirst, Washington's welfare reform program. The Partnership is blending child care subsidies with funding for Head Start and prekindergarten to provide full-day, full-year preschool care and education services, and the state has provided a blended funding and service model to grantees. Contact persons from WorkFirst, Head Start, and prekindergarten meet on a regular basis to provide updates about service delivery and to conduct cross-training to learn about each other's agency culture and services.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), in a 1999 policy statement on Early Childhood and Family Education, invited "all to come together at this extraordinary juncture to rethink our assumptions about how and when children learn and to renew our priorities and strategies. We must expand our efforts to see that every child receives the care and education, the skills and knowledge, needed to thrive in a fast-changing world, and to ensure that every family has the information, understanding, and support needed to give their children the best possible start in life. We are committed to . . .ensure that every child has the opportunity for high quality, universal early care and education at age 3 and 4 through either public or private schools and agencies with funding through public and/or private sources, depending on need." The CCSSO affirms that children's needs are great, and they are counting on the adults in their lives to "protect them; cherish them; understand them; guide them; and teach them."

What prekindergarten programs are already operating in Nevada?

Public prekindergarten programs in Nevada are funded from a variety of local, state, and federal sources. Private preschools serve children whose tuitions are paid by their families or subsidized by the State Division of Welfare using federal Child Care Development Fund dollars. A few employers provide or pay for child care as an employee benefit.

Nevada school districts were mandated in 1990 to start providing a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with developmental delays or disabilities on their third birthdays. Participating children with disabilities are the only ones reported as "pre-k" in school enrollment reports to the Department of Education (3,681 in 1999). These early childhood special education programs are primarily funded with state and local money, but some supplemental federal Preschool Grant funds are provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Some districts have focused portions of their federal Title I dollars on prekindergarten programs, but do not count those "at-risk" children on state enrollment reports. A few districts operate federally funded Migrant Home Early Learning Programs. Nevada has 6 Head Start grantees who directly receive federal grants to serve eligible three- and four-year-olds in a comprehensive program that includes education and health services. There are a few locally funded school district preschool classrooms and several districts that allow Head Start programs to operate in school facilities.

Five federally funded and seven state funded Even Start Family Literacy projects operate across the state, offering programs that include four required components: (1) adult education for parents who need adult basic education or English language acquisition and have children under the age of eight; (2) early childhood education provided in the home or center; (3) parenting education provided in the home or center; and (4) parent and child together time in the home or center.

Classroom on Wheels programs currently serve low-income children and families in Clark, Washoe, Storey, and Lyon Counties. Equipment and operating funds for the popular cow-patterned buses come from a variety of sources including the Nevada Department of Education, local partnerships, grants, and other fundraising activities.

An Education Week report in January 2000 ranked Nevada 40th in allocation of resources for education, spending an average of $5478 in federal and state funds per student. A 1997 Children's Defense Fund Briefing Report ranked Nevada 47th in its commitment to securing funds for child care and early education, spending 34 times more on Corrections, 101 times more on Highways, and 103 times more on Higher Education. A Nevada Department of Education study of the cost per child in prekindergarten programs in Nevada (see Table 1) revealed a range from $165 to $5,200 per child, depending on the intensity and duration of services. The average cost per child was calculated at $3,383, which is considerably below nationally recommended rates. According to state child care figures, the annual amount parents pay for a private center-based preschool in Nevada is between $4,000 and $6,000, with the quality of those services varying widely.

Table 1
Prekindergarten Education in Nevada Fiscal Year 1999

	Main Funding Source								
PROGRAM	**FED**	**STATE**	**LOCAL**	**PRIV**	**AVE. COST PER CHILD**	**3 YR. OLDS Served**	**4 YR. OLDS Served**	**5 YR. OLDS Served**	**TOTAL PreK Served in FY 1999**
Classroom on Wheels (3 counties)	X	X		X	$1100	171	269	214	654
Federal Even Start (5 projects)	X				$1283	41	42	45	128
State Even Start (7 projects)		X			$947	62	101	83	246
Sunrise HIPPY (Las Vegas)	X				$1200	80	133	15	228
Head Start (7 grantees)	X				$5200	994	1313	12	2319
Title I PreK (Clark Co. School District)	X				$3944	86	767	4379	5232
Subsidized Children in Private Preschools	X	X			$3780	642	698	630	1970
Migrant HELP (8 districts)	X				$944	28	75	14	117
School Dist. Preschool (Esmeralda, Eureka, Mineral)		X			$3625	13	36	12	61
PreK Academy (Clark Co. School District)			X		$165	97	373	340	810
Special Education (17 districts)		X	X		$2787	700	1335	1646	3681
Totals					$3383	2914	5142	7390	**15,446**

Notes:

- Estimated number of prekindergarten children in Nevada for FY99: **100,000**
- Number of children accounted for in prekindergarten programs or private preschools: **27,271**
- Balance of prekindergarten aged children in FY99 who may not have had a high quality preschool environment: **72,729**
- Total documented prekindergarten FY99 expenditures: $52,254,764 (primarily federal)
- There were 37 private "preschools" out of 1,074 facilities licensed by child care authorities in 1999, with a total of 39,416 child care spaces available statewide. Assuming 30% were preschool spaces, Nevada had 11,825 private preschool spaces.
- Cost per child was generally derived by dividing the project's total budget by the number of children served.
- Costs per child vary depending on frequency and intensity of services to children and families.
- Sunrise Children's Hospital Foundation operates the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) with a federal grant.
- Clark County School District PreK Academy is a 4-week program.
- Migrant Home Early Learning Program (HELP) provides services with federal Title 1 dollars to migrant families with young children.
- Some districts (such as Carson, Churchill, and Lander) place "immature" kindergarten-aged children in a "PreK" program, sometimes called "developmental kindergarten." Such children typically take two years to complete kindergarten. This report does not include those children since its focus is on education of children who are younger than kindergarten age.
- This table highlights the best information we currently have about prekindergarten programs in Nevada. Since an extensive survey has not been feasible, the numbers reported on this table were obtained by the Nevada Department of Education from a variety of sources, including written reports and individual telephone calls.

What features should be required to ensure the quality of prekindergarten programs?

During every waking moment, a child is learning. It is important to assure that the child's relationships and environment provide opportunities for optimum growth and development. The literature contains numerous quality indicators for prekindergarten programs. For example, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) promotes a highly regarded accreditation model, which reflects the profession's consensus of what constitutes high quality early childhood programs. Criteria have been established for interactions among teachers and children; curriculum; relationships among teachers and families; staff qualifications and professional development; administration; staffing; physical environment; health and safety; nutrition and food services; and evaluation.

The following criteria are a synthesis of some of the commonly used indicators or features that contribute to an educational setting where a child can receive high-quality early care and education. It is expected that a list like this will be the foundation of a request for proposals when the Nevada State Legislature allocates funds for prekindergarten programs.

A high quality prekindergarten program should:

1. Employ teachers and other staff with training and experience in early childhood growth, development, and diversity, who have knowledge, skills, and expectations that are appropriate for the ages and stages of the children with whom they work, who model the behaviors they want from children, and who are certified in First Aid and CPR.

2. Pay teachers comparable to K-12 salary scales so they will stay on the job and in the profession. Low turnover is important for children's emotional attachments.

3. Use behavior management techniques such as redirection, encouragement, modeling, and reinforcement; set realistic, clear limits; and encourage children to verbalize their feelings, wants, and needs.

4. Welcome children from diverse cultures, including those with disabilities, and employ teachers who represent the cultures and languages of the students and their families.

5. Provide universal access to preschool experiences for all families who want it, at no cost to the family or with fees on a sliding scale based on family income.

6. Ensure a small group size and a low ratio of children per teacher to assure individual attention and responsiveness to the needs of children.

7. Balance indoor/outdoor, active/quiet, speaking/listening, and group/individual activities.

8. Encourage many creative arts, such as painting, music, dance, and theater.

9. Read to children daily and provide other literacy experiences to promote language development.

10. Arrange the environment so that children can build their own learning through concrete, active, uninterrupted play. Design indoor and outdoor environments that are beautiful, clean, safe, inviting, and interesting, with furnishings that are the appropriate size for the children.

11. Communicate formally, informally, and often with parents, encouraging them to be continually interested and involved in parent-child together time, policy making, volunteering, publicity, and other home-school partnerships.

12. Plan on-going staff training/personnel development as an integral part of the program.

13. Strive to meet NAEYC accreditation standards, holding regular staff meetings to address planning and implementation of those standards.

14. Implement a responsible, holistic accountability system, which includes assessments using observation, anecdotal records, skill assessment, and parent reports.

15. Require communication between preschool and kindergarten teachers to prepare for and assure continuity in the transition from one program to another.

How can it be done in Nevada?

Early care and education in the twenty-first century must take into account five issues known as the five As or A[5]:

- **A**ccess for all children whose parents choose to enroll them
- **A**ffordability for families, teacher-caregivers, and society
- **A**ppropriateness of sound developmental pedagogy for age, individuals, and context
- **A**ccountability that is responsible, respectful of children, and helpful to public policy
- **A**dvocacy for high quality programs and systems *(Kagan, 1999)*

The National Governors' Association (NGA) Center for Best Practices prepared a Nevada: Early Childhood briefing paper for Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn in 1999. That paper, included later in this document, encouraged the Governor to consider "developing an early childhood agenda that promotes school readiness." In 2000, the NGA, in partnership with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and The Finance Project, sponsored a conference entitled, Strategizing for School

Readiness. Nevada's team drafted the following proposal, which could be fleshed out by stakeholders:

GOAL: *Children will start school with the healthy minds, bodies and mental alertness necessary for learning.*

STRATEGIES:

1. *Use existing collaborative committees (such as Child Care Steering Committee, Head Start State Collaboration Steering Committee, Early Intervention Interagency Coordinating Council, Family Literacy Consortium, Maternal and Child Health Board, Kids Count Advisory Council, Success by Six Statewide Coalition, State Special Education Advisory Committee, and Title I Committee of Practitioners) to establish one Early Childhood Plan for Nevada, that includes common statewide indicators of success.*

2. *Implement the 1999 recommendations of the Child Care Advisory Committee, with emphasis on development of a career ladder and implementation of a comprehensive public awareness effort.*

3. *Request a Legislative Interim Study on Early Care and Education.*

4. *Continue and expand successful comprehensive programs for young children and their families, such as Even Start, Classroom on Wheels, Family to Family Connection, and Head Start.*

Eventually Nevada must make a permanent commitment for a statewide Early Childhood Education Program that will make quality environments and education accessible to every Nevada child from birth. Nevada already has effective models established in the state. When policy makers commit to supporting universal voluntary prekindergarten services for all children, a phase-in plan must be established. The total amount to be allocated could be based on a formula that takes into account the cost per child for quality programs, the number of three-four-, and five-year-old children in the state, the percentage of children in poverty, and the number of children not being served in quality prekindergarten programs.

Initially, state funds should be allocated to expand existing effective prekindergarten programs so that more children and families can be served. The Legislature could approve enhancement of the Department of Education's budget for Early Childhood Education Programs for the 2001-2003 biennium. Those funds could be made available on a competitive basis to school districts and community-based organizations to expand or initiate programs that meet the quality criteria listed on pages 11 and 12.

	YEAR		
Population Projections from the Nevada State Demographer	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**
Number of 3 year olds in Nevada	27,793	29,132	29,851
Percentage of 3 year olds in poverty	16.7%	16.8%	16.9%
Number of 4 year olds in Nevada	26,886	28,134	29,363

Percentage of 4 year olds in poverty	16.4%	16.7%	16.8%
Number of 5 year olds in Nevada	27,209	27,867	28,814
Percentage of 5 year olds in poverty	16.1%	16.6%	16.9%

According to the above estimates, thousands of children will be in need of quality early childhood education and family literacy services in each year of the 2001-03 biennium. If the average cost per child is set at $5,000, an annual legislative appropriation of $2,000,000 will provide services for approximately 400 children each year. In succeeding biennia, if the annual allocation is increased to $4,000,000 per year, 800 children can be served in high quality state-funded early childhood education programs annually.

Proposed state early childhood education allocations for the next two biennia:

FY 02-03 $4,000,000.00 Serving 400 children *annually* at $5,000 each

FY 04-05 $8,000,000.00 Serving 800 children *annually* at $5,000 each

When multiple agencies manage early care and education programs, mission fragmentation and program overlap may occur. This creates the potential for service duplication and gaps. In addition to strengthening current effective programs, Nevada needs a legislatively established Interim Study of Early Care and Education. Participating stakeholders and policymakers could develop a plan to coordinate, integrate, or consolidate programs. The Nevada Success by Six (SBS) Statewide Coalition is a non-profit organization that has the support of many early childhood advocates in Nevada. SBS may have an interest in assisting with the coordination of a Legislative Interim Study

In order to identify the best method for providing a comprehensive system of early care and education, Nevada's prekindergarten education policymakers must take into account the following questions, depending upon the availability of resources and the priorities of state leaders:

1. Who shall receive the services?
2. Who shall deliver the services?
3. What is the nature of the services?
4. What are the conditions under which services will be delivered?

Conclusion and Recommendations

Convincing research, national trends, and poor state rankings are placing increased pressure on Nevada policy makers to make significant financial commitments to young children and their families so that all of Nevada's children will receive the foundations necessary for success in school and in life. The 2001 Nevada State Legislature is encouraged to place an emphasis on prekindergarten education for school readiness by

1. Increasing education funding for successful programs such as Even Start, Head Start, and Classroom on Wheels.

2. Commissioning a Legislative Interim Study to develop a plan for a comprehensive system of early care and education in Nevada.

Following is a briefing paper that the National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices prepared in 1999 for Governor Kenny C. Guinn and his policy staff as he assumed leadership in Nevada. For more detailed information or consultation contact Helene Stebbins, Senior Policy Analyst, 202/624-5378 or <hstebbins@nga.org>.

Nevada: Early Childhood

Research indicates that the early years of a child's life represent a critical period of social and psychological development. To ensure a healthy start, young children need appropriate stimulation, nurturing, and health care, particularly between birth and age three. Nevada has already begun to strengthen services for young children through the creation of several programs administered by the departments of human resources and education aimed at improving child development, children's health, parenting skills, family literacy, and other aspects of child well-being.

During his state of the state address, Governor Guinn emphasized the need to make prudent and efficient state spending decisions and to improve government accountability. He recognized the need to exercise fiscal restraint in anticipation of potential economic downturns, especially since the largely tourist-based economy in Nevada is highly susceptible to recession. Governor Guinn also stated that he will "insist upon accountability at all levels," and that he will hold state programs accountable to government leaders as well as the general public.

This briefing paper builds on these themes, identifying early childhood policy and program options that complement Governor Guinn's desire to ensure government efficiency and accountability. It provides information on how Nevada compares with other states on key indicators for early childhood, an overview of some of the major child well-being and early childhood programs in the state, and recommendations on how to improve outcomes for children. Further details on the multiple state models cited in the memo are available through the NGA Center for Best Practices.

Nevada Early Childhood Indicators

Indicator	State Percentage	Trend	National Percentage	State Rank
Children below age six in poverty (1992–96)[1]	16.6	↔	24.7	8
Families with children below age six headed by a single parent (1992–96)[1]	25.4	↔	27.9	24
Mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy (1997)[2]	76.1	↑	82.5	47
Low birth weight babies (1997)[2]	7.7	↑	7.5	27
Estimated vaccination coverage among children from 19 months to 35 months (1997)[3]	73.0	↔	78	45

Source: 1. U.S. Census Bureau, March Current Population Survey, 1993-1997. 2. National Vital Statistics Report, Vol. 47, No. 4, October 7, 1998. 3. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Vol. 47, No. 26, July 10, 1998.

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Overview of Early Childhood Programs in Nevada

Family-to-Family Connection	Offers voluntary home visits to all parents, regardless of income, with infants from birth through age one at thirteen Infant Support Districts, in order to enhance child growth and development. Additional resources include thirty new baby centers (offer parent education, links to early childhood services) and thirty-four resource lending centers (lend cribs, blankets, videotapes). The program is funded at $6.4 million for fiscal 1999 ($5.6 million in state funds, $840,000 in federal funds, and $225,000 in-kind contributions). Governor Guinn's proposed budget includes a 50 percent reduction in funding for Family-to-Family in the fiscal biennium.
Classroom on Wheels (COW)	Provides seven refurbished buses painted black and white that serve as classrooms for preschool education in low-income neighborhoods. The program offers bilingual services and emphasizes prevention of at-risk behavior. Close to $180,000 in state funds supported purchase/refurbishing of the buses during the previous biennium; a nonprofit organization and some federal funds provide ongoing program support. The Governor's proposed budget does not include funding for this program.
Family Resource Centers	Community-based centers designed to develop a continuum of services for at-risk families are located in forty neighborhoods. Some centers focus on young children in response to local priorities, but they are not required to do so by the state. The program is funded at $1.4 million in state funds for fiscal 1999. Governor Guinn has proposed funding the centers at $1.4 million in his fiscal 2000 budget.

Nevada Even Start Family Literacy (NEST)	Offers home-based family literacy services and parenting skills instruction for parents of children from birth to age eight, without regard to income. The state provided $828,000 for each year of fiscal 1998-99 to support seven sites; five sites are funded with $565,400 in federal dollars. The Governor's proposed budget does not provide any state support for NEST and the state-funded projects are due to end in June 1999. *[Note: Report written in 1999. Some funding was restored by 1999 Legislature.]*
State Prekindergarten	No state funding for prekindergarten program or Head Start.
Child Care	Children in families with income up to 75 percent of the state median income are eligible for child care assistance, regardless of their welfare status. Child care is guaranteed for families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and those transitioning off of TANF are given next priority for child care assistance.
State Children's Health Insurance	Children from birth through age eighteen in families with income up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for Nevada Check-Up, the state's child health insurance program.

The Importance of Early Childhood Development

The early experiences of a baby have a decisive impact on the architecture of the brain and the capacity for the baby to develop as an adult. Decades of research on brain chemistry and new technologies that take pictures of brain activity show that positive interactions between adults and infants actually provide nutrition for the development of an infant's brain. During these early years, nurturing stimulation helps the brain lay the foundation for later learning and development. If the foundation is weak or cracked, the child will struggle with intellectual and social development later in life. In some cases, remediation will repair the problem. In other cases, the opportunity is lost forever.

Neurons are the basic building blocks of the brain, and connections among neurons are formed as the growing child experiences his or her surroundings. These connections, or synapses, create networks that help the brain make sense of the environment. They help us see, hear, feel, reason, and control our emotions. If the networks are used repeatedly—if the experience is reinforced in the early years—they become a permanent part of the brain's foundation. If they are not used often enough, they are eliminated. For example, if the neurons that create networks from the eyes are not stimulated due to cataracts, a

child loses the ability to see as early as six weeks after birth, even if the cataracts are removed later.

In addition to the new research on infant brain development, numerous experiments show that early intervention programs improve children's health and development. The subsequent savings from reduced costs for health care, remedial education, criminal justice, and cash assistance programs are greater than the costs of the intervention programs when they target children who have developmental delays, are born premature, or come from low-income families.

Nevada—Looking Ahead

As a fiscal conservative and a strong proponent of education, Governor Guinn may want to consider developing an early childhood agenda that promotes school readiness. Appendix A summarizes the research on how early investments in child development reduce future costs for remedial education, juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, and welfare dependency. To improve school readiness, the Governor may want to coordinate early childhood services, increase the availability of quality child care, and establish a system of accountability to measure program outcomes.

I. Coordinating Early Childhood Services

Nevada's Family-to-Family Connection program enables local communities to build on the strengths of families and create comprehensive service connections locally. It provides a strong foundation for developing a coordinated approach to the provision of early childhood services through thirteen infant support districts that offer home visits, immunizations, nutritional support, parent education, and equipment lending services. However, the districts only serve families with children up to age one. The Governor may want to consider how related programs that serve older children might be linked with Family-to-Family. The following two strategies are options for sustaining financial and administrative support for early childhood services over the long term.

Enhance the State-Level Governance Structure

Because early childhood crosses several domains—health, education, and social services—a formal early childhood governance structure can promote coordination among the multiple programs, streamlining administration and improving efficiency. Currently, multiple early childhood governance structures exist in Nevada. Regional boards in northern and southern Nevada oversee the local district boards of Family-to-Family Connection, and each district's plan must be approved by the state block grant commission. Nevada also has a Governor-appointed interagency coordinating council (required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and a child care advisory committee. While each group has oversight for individual programs, Governor Guinn may want to combine related committees where certain responsibilities overlap or charge a single group with coordinating all early childhood programs in the state. This

committee should have authority to make decisions that cross agency domains, resources to encourage collaboration, and the strong support of the Governor or his designee.

Governors in other states are taking similar approaches to coordinating early childhood programs. Staff in Kentucky's Office of Early Childhood Development and Georgia's Office of School Readiness report directly to the Governor. In North Carolina, Governor James B. Hunt Jr. created the private, nonprofit North Carolina Partnership for Children to run his community-based Smart Start initiative. In Ohio, former Governor George V. Voinovich's Cabinet Council oversees the Ohio Family and Children First initiative, which is located in the Governor's office.

Allocate Funds to Support Collaboration and Sustain Programming

Currently, early childhood programs are fragmented by categorical funding streams and turf battles between agencies. To coordinate these programs, program administrators need resources for collaboration. Allocating a small amount of "glue money" for administration acknowledges there are costs associated with collaboration. Holding meetings, keeping communication between agencies open and ongoing, and changing the way services are delivered take time and money. Expecting collaboration without funding will produce only small changes. Community-based collaborations for children in Indiana, North Carolina, and Ohio all include funds for the administration of the collaboration.

II. Increasing Child Care Availability and Quality

Nevada realizes the importance of making child care available, affordable, and of high quality to promote positive early childhood development. The state expanded its investment in infant child care, enhanced licensing requirements and monitoring of child care settings, and supported training in infant/toddler and special needs care. The state also has secured commitments with employers such as Citibank and MGM Grand to offer child care services to their employees. While the state has made strides in improving child care services for Nevada families, there is still a waiting list for services even after the state allocated all of its federal Child Care and Development Fund block grant in the fiscal 1998–99 biennium. Governor Guinn may want to consider some of the following options for enhancing child care.

Promote Additional Employer Investment in Expanding Child Care

A strong economy and low unemployment rate means employers are looking for ways to attract and retain good employees. Some businesses are opening on-site child care centers. Others are helping employees locate reliable child care in the community. Providing child care assistance reduces absenteeism and turnover and improves the bottom line for businesses. One strategy for increasing the availability of child care in Nevada is for the state to increase its partnerships with businesses to improve the quality and the availability of affordable child care. The Child Care Partnership Project is a joint project of the NGA Center for Best Practices, the Families and Work Institute and The

Finance Project to document successful public-private partnerships for child care and provide technical assistance to develop and sustain partnerships. The project has created an employer toolkit template that a state can adapt to encourage child care partnerships with businesses. The toolkit includes the business case for investing in child care and outlines the options businesses have to meet the dependent care needs of their employees.

The Child Care Partnership Project also profiles model partnerships for child care.

- Florida provides matching funds to employers who provide subsidies to their low-income employees through its Child Care Executive Partnership. Using the federal Child Care and Development Fund, Florida provides one dollar for each dollar a business contributes to the cost of child care for low-income employees.

- The Texas Work and Family Clearinghouse helps Texas employers maintain a diverse workforce through the promotion and support of dependent care policies and programs in the workplace and the community. Through local employer coalitions, the clearinghouse provides employers with information about policies for dependent care assistance. The clearinghouse also has sponsored regional conferences on work/family issues, including child care, elder care, and community resource development. The conferences produced employer coalitions that pooled resources, shared information, and established an action plan to address dependent care concerns within their own communities.

Increase Financing Opportunities for Child Care Providers

Several states have established child care loan funds to support providers who are trying to start or expand their businesses. Loan funds help purchase equipment and support training for child care teachers. Loans for capital improvements are especially difficult to obtain, and several states have established facilities funds specifically for child care. The Child Care Partnership Project published a case study of the child care facilities fund in San Francisco, and NGA has more information on the Illinois, Maryland, New Hampshire, and Ohio facilities funds. These funds vary in structure, but many use the credit of the state to back loan funds for building or renovating child care facilities. Other states are exploring lotteries and tobacco settlement funds as sources of revenue to support the financial stability of the child care industry.

Train and Retain Qualified Teachers

The preparation of the next generation of workers depends on the quality of the teachers who care for them as children. Investing in the career development of teachers and stabilizing high turnover rates will raise the quality of care for all young children. Nevada's statewide video training initiative, cosponsored with the University of Nevada-Reno Cooperative Extension Service and Project Exceptional, trains teachers to work with children with special needs and provides a good start in training quality teachers.

Nevada also is developing licensing standards for early childhood educators with the Committee on Professional Standards for Teachers. Governor Guinn may want to strengthen these efforts by investing in teacher retention initiatives. For example, North Carolina's T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project (Teacher Education And Compensation Helps) provides financial assistance and rewards to teachers who complete additional training. The costs of the training and the financial rewards are divided among teachers, their employers, and the state. Rhode Island's RIte Care reduces turnover by extending state health care benefits to providers who care for low-income children. Some providers pay a monthly copayment for health care benefits while others receive a full subsidy from the state.

III. Measuring Program Outcomes and Establishing a System of Accountability

Performance measures not only assist the Governor in evaluating program effectiveness and making policy and program changes, they also serve as a tangible measure of accountability for the press, advocates, Congress, the administration, and other parties interested in monitoring child well-being in Nevada. Family-to-Family Connection has proposed conducting a formal assessment of family satisfaction with a goal of attaining a 90 percent satisfaction rate each year. However, most early childhood programs have not developed formal and comprehensive performance measures to assess program outcomes and their accountability.

Vermont's indicators of social well-being have rallied communities around reducing high rates of teen pregnancy and child abuse, creating dramatic improvements in these conditions. Communities are rewarded by receiving a portion of the state's savings achieved as a result of the improved outcome. Missouri recently implemented an accountability system similar to Vermont for its Caring Communities initiative. Like Nevada's Family-to-Family Connection, Caring Communities provides local control to improve outcomes for children and families. Governor Guinn might consider developing performance measures that can be linked to different programs and applying the indicators statewide. He also may want to design a plan that focuses on results and shows progress to state legislators, similar to his accountability plan for education.

How NGA Can Help

The National Governors' Association Center for Best Practices provides Governors and their policy staff with information about innovative state practices, explores the impact of federal initiatives on state government, and provides technical assistance in a wide variety of policy fields. The past two chairmen of the National Governors' Association made early childhood development a top priority for the organization, raising NGA's profile as a national leader on this issue. The following activities are examples of how NGA can help Governor Guinn develop an early childhood agenda.

Governors Mentoring Governors on Early Childhood

To continue the NGA focus on early childhood development, former NGA Chairman Ohio Governor George V. Voinovich and current NGA Chairman Delaware Governor Thomas R. Carper created an early childhood mentoring program. Seven Governors who made this issue a priority in their administration have volunteered to mentor new Governors who also want to make it a priority. These seven Governors are: Kansas Governor Bill Graves; former Nevada Governor Bob Miller; North Carolina Governor James B. Hunt Jr.; former Ohio Governor George V. Voinovich; Rhode Island Governor Lincoln Almond; Vermont Governor Howard Dean, M.D.; and West Virginia Governor Cecil H. Underwood. One of these Governors will be assigned as Governor Guinn's mentor, and NGA will facilitate communication with any other Governors he may wish to contact.

Child Care Partnership Project

NGA is partnering with the Families and Work Institute and The Finance Project to document models of public-private partnerships for child care. Twenty-four profiles, five case studies, and a guide to successful public-private partnerships for child care is available through the National Child Care Information Center at <www.nccic.org/ccpartnerships>. The Partnership Project also has developed a toolkit for encouraging businesses to provide child care for their employees.

Peer Networking and Customized Assistance

NGA staff is available to provide phone consultations to policy advisors, do quick turnaround research on an issue, convene small meetings, and link advisors in one state with their counterparts in other states who have addressed similar issues. Ongoing technical assistance is available to ensure that good ideas become good policy.

NGA Web Site <http://www.nga.org/CBP/Activities/ChildrenNFamilies.asp>.
This site provides access to the full text of many useful resources, as well as links to related sites.

Table 6. State Ranking on Financial Commitment to Child Care and Early Education, and a Comparison of the Amount States Spend on Child Care/Early

Education to the Amount States Spend on Corrections, Highways, and Higher Education, 1994.

State	Rank of State Commitment to Securing Funds for Child Care and Early Education 1/ (highest to lowest)	How Many Times As Much Does Each State Spend On: Corrections as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/	Highways as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/.	Higher Education as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/
Alabama	39	26	105	202
Alaska	1	7	27	14
Arizona	36	21	58	70
Arkansas	44	12	54	66
California	14	7	10	22
Colorado	27	15	41	81
Connecticut	9	14	24	26
Delaware	13	15	45	75
Florida	12	9	20	23
Georgia	23	12	17	35
Hawaii	5	5	17	26
Idaho	48	31	141	184
Illinois	11	5	16	19
Indiana	41	24	99	180
Iowa	35	11	59	83
Kansas	29	12	49	59
Kentucky	7	4	18	26
Louisiana	46	43	115	180
Maine	32	11	56	74
Maryland	20	16	24	37
Massachusetts	2	5	11	10
Michigan	28	18	30	68
Minnesota	15	4	20	32
Mississippi	50	78	423	636
Missouri	38	12	58	63
Montana	45	33	192	235
Nebraska	19	6	38	47
Nevada	47	34	101	103
New Hampshire	22	12	49	77

New Jersey	24	10	27	32

Key Facts About Child Care and Early Education:
Children's Defense Fund 1997 Briefing Book

Table 6, Page 2

State	Rank of State Commitment to Securing Funds for Child Care and Early Education 1/ (highest to lowest)	How Many Times As Much Does Each State Spend On: Corrections as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/	Highways as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/	Higher Education as on Child Care and Early Education? 2/
New Mexico	37	20	100	103
New York	4	7	9	16
North Carolina	10	12	28	46
North Dakota	42	18	240	393
Ohio	16	9	24	36
Oklahoma	8	6	20	33
Oregon	17	8	29	37
Pennsylvania	18	11	33	47
Rhode Island	21	16	32	47
South Carolina	31	15	30	67
South Dakota	49	57	366	326
Tennessee	30	27	74	115
Texas	26	16	21	43
Utah	34	7	21	59
Vermont	3	3	22	31
Virginia	43	35	84	121
Washington	6	7	21	37
West Virginia	25	10	129	111
Wisconsin	33	14	39	64
Wyoming	40	24	211	169

Source: Adams and Poersch, *Who Cares? State Commitment to Child Care and Early Education* (Washington, DC: Children's Defense Fund), 1996.

1/ State commitment measured by funds secured by state action in 1994 for *direct* child care and early education services per child younger than 15 in the state. State-secured funds include all state funds, federal funds that states had to match, and federal funds that could have been spent on a range of programs but that the state chose to allocate to child care and early education. It also includes local funds in the few states that reported such funds in their state totals. Federal funds made available to states without state effort (such as the former Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start) are not included. Data in this report are *not* comparable to the 1992 Children's Defense Fund report, *State Investments in Child Care and Early Childhood Education, 1990*, by Adams and Sandfort.

2/ Data on state spending on corrections, highways, and higher education taken from US Bureau of the Census, *Government Finances, 1994*. State spending on child care and early education from CDF surveys – only *state (non-federal) dollars* were used in comparison with state spending on other priorities.

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